

Unique imaging of a dinosaur's skull tells evolutionary tale

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Using Los Alamos National Laboratory's unique neutron-imaging and high-energy X-ray capabilities, researchers have exposed the inner structures of the fossil skull of a 74-million-year-old tyrannosauroid dinosaur nicknamed the Bisti Beast in the highest-resolution scan of tyrannosaur skull ever done. The results add a new piece to the puzzle of how these bone-crushing top predators evolved over millions of years.

Normally, we look at a variety of thick, dense objects at Los Alamos for defense programs, but the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science was interested in imaging a very large fossil to learn about what's inside," said Ron Nelson, of the Laboratory's Physics Division. Nelson was part of a team that included staff from Los Alamos National Laboratory, the museum, the University of New Mexico and the University of Edinburgh. "It turns out that high energy neutrons are an interesting and unique way to image something of this size."

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